



#STRONGIOWA

2021 IN MITCHELL COUNTY

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach connects the needs of Iowans with Iowa State research and resources. We listen, learn, and work with the people of Mitchell County for a #STRONGIOWA.



**Sustainable
ENVIRONMENTS**



**Thriving
COMMUNITIES**



**Resilient
PEOPLE**



**Future
LEADERS**

Serving the People of Mitchell County

As Iowans adjusted to life during the COVID-19 pandemic, ISU Extension and Outreach continued to prioritize health and safety as we delivered research-based education to the people of Mitchell County. During 2021

The Mitchell County Extension Council has been elected by the people of the county to guide local educational programming by partnering with extension staff. From needs assessment through program implementation and evaluation of outcomes, the council represents you and your issues. We are always serving Iowans and we are here for you. Now. Always.

Thank you for your support.

Kirk Phelps

Council Chair

Jill Popp

Council Treasurer

Denise Gerdtz

Council Member

Keith Meitner

Council Member

Bryan Tabbert

Council Member

Shawn Sponheim

Council Vice Chair

Mary Klaes

Council Secretary

Joe Klaes

Council Member

Angie Sprung

Council Member

to the people of Mitchell County. During 2021 we focused on the following efforts.

Annie's Project Goes Virtual

Mitchell and Cerro Gordo counties partnered together to offer the first ever virtual Annie's Project. The six-week course, designed to help farm women develop their management and decision-making skills, met weekly with a 30-minute virtual networking time followed by virtual education on covering the five areas of agricultural risk management: financial, human resources, legal, marketing, and production.

Participants online joined virtually from across the United States from New York to California, although most had ties to the Midwest. Many said they found the program of great interest and value. Each week included presentations by extension specialists and discussion of the topic. In addition, guest speakers shared their personal experiences and professional knowledge to help women become better business partners and owners.



ANNIE'S PROJECT
EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Welcome and Best Wishes

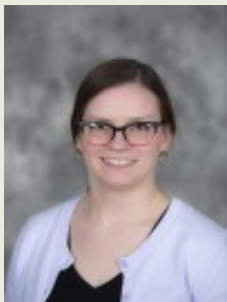
While COVID-19 continued to challenge our ability to deliver programming, it did not slow change in the lives of our staff. In 2021, we welcomed new staff to our office and sent best wishes to staff who departed, bound for new adventures.



In May we welcomed Brenna Kruse as a student intern. Brenna worked on the 2021 fair and youth program special projects.



In July we welcomed back Abbie Johnson, youth program assistant and fair assistant, to offer additional youth programming through the summer.



In September we said farewell to Olivia Logue, county youth coordinator, as she left extension for a career change.



Virtual Mindful Teen Program Reaches Hundreds of Local Youth

In May ISU Extension and Outreach in Mitchell County partnered with the Cedar River Complex and several local businesses to deliver the Mindful Teen program to all students in grades 7-12 in the Osage Community School District. The goal of the program was to provide students with useful skills and “tools” to apply in their daily life to improve their overall well-being now and in their future. The program was conducted by adult facilitator Olivia Logue and Cedar River Complex staff Carrie Barker and Nicole Dodd.

Youth participants learned about the concept of mindfulness through a 12-week workshop series based on the book *The Mindful Teen: Powerful Skills to Help You Handle Stress One Moment at a Time* by Dzung X. Vo. Following each lesson, youth shared something they learned with a friend, peer, or family member. Participants learned that the benefits of mindfulness are just as helpful for adults. Workshop activities focused on mindful eating, yoga, and mindful moment strategies. Our second mindful eating practice during week three included pizza from Limestone Brewers. Cedar River Complex staffer Jolene Norby created yoga videos that were used throughout the 12-week series.

Copies of the book were made available in local libraries with the support of a grant provided by Shop on State, a local business. To learn more about the Mindful Teen program, contact Mitchell County Extension.



Celebrating Literacy Month

March was literacy month and Mitchell County partnered with our three local libraries to share how STEM activities and reading go hand in hand with agriculture.

The three libraries received a combined 105 books with STEM activities, information on reading with your child, and mental health resources. The books were *Carlos in the Cornfield*, *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic*, and *My Family's Soybean Field*. STEM kits gave the kids a chance to grow their own seeds.

The Stacyville Library reached 23 children in 14 families with our ag literature STEM kits. "Thank you for partnering with our library, especially with the emphasis on agriculture with these STEM kits. Even though we are a small rural community, there is sometimes a disconnect with families from agriculture. We appreciate the efforts of ISU Extension and their partners in their efforts to educate the public," shared librarian Barb Klapperich.

In addition the Osage Public Library gave away 52 kits, reaching five 4-H members and 47 non-4H members. The St. Ansgar Library gave away 30 kits to early readers under the age of eight. Each library also received the book *Full of Beans*, *Henry Ford Grows a Car* to add to their shelves for checkout.

Partnering to reach our rural communities, emphasizing STEM at an early age, and supporting literature right here at the local level were the goals of this great program offered by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in Mitchell County.



Mitchell County Ag Breakfast Returns

After an uninvited break in 2020 due to COVID-19, the Mitchell County Ag Breakfast returned on June 17. Sixty-seven attendees from throughout the county and beyond joined us for breakfast and a program.

Featured speaker was Larry Tranel, extension specialist, who delivered a program titled, "Rural Resiliency: Caring for You and Yours." With his help, we reached a large audience of rural citizens and businesses, taking away the stigma associated with mental health assistance.

As a direct result of that program, two clients contacted our office to check on further resources related to the presentation, and we scheduled a Mental Health First Aide training for ag businesses in our county, working to reach as many Mitchell County citizens as possible with a goal of helping with the COVID-19 recovery.



Volunteer Income Tax Assistance



Mitchell County offered free tax help to people who generally make \$54,000 or less and/or persons with disabilities, the elderly, and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. Mitchell County provided 50 individuals with this service in 2021 with COVID-19 safety precautions in place.

Showcasing 4-H at the County Fair

The Mitchell County Fair returned in 2021, providing the opportunity for youth to demonstrate what they had learned through their 4-H project work over the past year.

Olivia DeMaris, St. Ansgar Believers 4-H Club, shared: "With help from sponsors, I was able to take care of and show a pig this year at fair, something I never thought I would be able to do because we live in town. I learned so much about raising livestock and had so much fun this past summer with my York pig, whom I named Sammy. He weighed about 40 lbs. when I first got him and at fair he was 270 lbs. He gained a lot from April to August. We placed as Reserve Champion in our pig challenge class and fifth overall in our regular market class. I'm excited to show more livestock next year!"

Olivia and the other pig challenge participants donated all meat to Mitchell County food banks, providing families meat directly on their table, as 4-H'ers addressing food insecurity.



Extension Partners with Elderbridge Agency on Aging

Each month participants from the Osage Senior Center interested in having fun and improving their health gather for Nutrition Conversations, a free program designed to support healthy aging and independence. The group discusses current nutrition and health topics, tastes low-cost healthy recipes, and discovers new ways to stay active and independent with physical activity and healthy eating habits. The group has open discussions to share ideas, providing a social aspect to this fun event.

ServSafe Ensures Food Safety and Allows Food Service Operations to Re-open



The Iowa Food Code requires every foodservice establishment have at least one Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM). The National Restaurant Association's ServSafe® program is the national standard for this certification. In

2021, ISU Extension and Outreach staff in Mitchell County and Amy Jones, an extension human sciences specialist, teamed up to offer a ServSafe® class in person by implementing COVID-19 precautions (limiting class size, physical distancing, mask use, and cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces). In Mitchell County, six out of seven people passed the certification exam (86%). This quick response helped foodservice operations meet state food safety standards for re-opening during difficult times.

Extension Staff



Darla Olson
Director/Program Coordinator



Donovan Olson
Regional Director



Susan Ringhofer
Office Assistant



Brenna Kruse
Youth Assistant



Abbie Johnson
County Fair/Youth Program Assistant

ISU Extension and Outreach Mitchell County

315 Main Street

Osage, IA 50461-1122

641-732-5574

www.extension.iastate.edu/mitchell



This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext. ADV.21.04G. September 2021